

Lake Greenwood Facts

Buzzard's Roost Hydro Project (circa 1940)



Lake Greenwood was created between 1935 and 1940 by the construction of the Buzzard's Roost Dam near Chappels, SC. The powerhouse was equipped with three turbines each driving a 5 megawatt AC generator to provide power to the Greenwood area.

Water was impounded to a surface elevation of 440 feet above sea level, which was later revised to 439 feet above sea level for efficient operations and reserve storage capacity. This facility was built and operated by the Greenwood County Electrification Commission until the Commission was dissolved and the operations folded into the general county administration. In 1966, Greenwood County held a referendum and by a narrow voting margin, elected to sell the transmission lines and the steam generating plant and to lease the powerhouse to Duke Power Company. The lease on the hydroelectric plant continues through 2006, at which time control reverts to the County.



As part of their requirements in the 40 year lease, Duke Power has been working for the last number of years on Greenwood County's behalf to renew the operating license with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for the next 40 years of lake operation. Part of this process includes the input of all state and federal agencies in setting new rules for operation regarding historical preservations, fish and wildlife habitat, river sustained flows, drawdown curves, fishery issues, and improved public access. The newly constructed boat launching facility near the dam which was built by Duke on the county's behalf under the lease is one of the new requirements. Currently, an additional facility is planned for the Newberry County side and scheduled for construction in four to six years.

Recent years have brought considerable development around the lake, which is becoming a choice residential and retirement area for Greenwood, Laurens, and Newberry counties. New residents and homeowners are coming to Greenwood Lake from all parts of the country to enjoy the lake views, boating, water sports, fishing, and golf. In order to insure that the development takes place in a way that doesn't impact the lake and fishery, the FERC has required that the County become more diligent in the permitting of docks, ramps, and retaining walls to insure that the concerns of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources requirements for the protection of fish habitat are addressed.